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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
25 May 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

US Public Statements on Freedom
of the Strait of Tiran

1. In 1957, the US Government placed itself on public record supporting the freedom of the Gulf of Aqaba and access to it via the Strait of Tiran. In an address to the nation on 27 February 1957, reviewing US policy, President Eisenhower said: "With reference to the passage into and through the Gulf of Aqaba, we expressed the conviction that the Gulf constitutes international waters and that no nation has the right to prevent free and innocent passage in the gulf. We announced that the United States was prepared to exercise this right itself and to join with others to secure general recognition of this right.We should not assume that, if Israel withdraws, Egypt will prevent Israeli shipping from using the Suez Canal or the Gulf of Aqaba. If, unhappily, Egypt does hereafter violate the Armistice Agreement or other international obligations, then this should be dealt with firmly by the society of nations." The Arab States took issue with this view at the time, but there has been little public controversy over the matter in recent years.

2. The Department of State, INR and the policy desk, tell us that they know of no recent public reaffirmation of the US view of the Tiran issue before Nasir's assertion of 22 May that the Strait of Tiran was closed to the Israelis.

State Dept. review completed

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